



1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 31

2 WHEREAS, In Illinois, over 200,000 children under the age  
3 of 18 are living with and being cared for by more than 100,000  
4 grandparents; and

5 WHEREAS, Grandparent caregivers, the majority of whom are  
6 single women ranging in age from 30 to 90 with an average  
7 annual income of \$15,000 to \$25,000, typically raise one to two  
8 grandchildren and have been doing so for five years or longer;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Factors contributing to the growing number of  
11 grandparents raising grandchildren include, but are not  
12 limited to, alcohol and drug abuse, neglect, abuse,  
13 abandonment, death of a parent, HIV/AIDS, divorce,  
14 unemployment, poverty, parental incarceration, teen pregnancy,  
15 and welfare reform; and

16 WHEREAS, Due to their assumed caregiving responsibilities,  
17 many grandparents deplete their savings and retirement income  
18 and face severe financial risk and economic strains while  
19 struggling to pay for expenses related to caring for the  
20 grandchildren, such as, but not limited to, food, diapers,  
21 clothing, child care, medical treatment, legal assistance, and  
22 housing needs; and

23 WHEREAS, Many grandparents take custody of and raise their  
24 grandchildren after a harmful incident has been suffered by  
25 their grandchildren that has caused the Department of Children  
26 and Family Services to designate them to be "at risk"; and

27 WHEREAS, Many other grandparents take preventive measures  
28 by choosing to take custody of and raise their grandchildren  
29 prior to their grandchildren suffering a harmful incident when  
30 they recognize that their grandchildren's health, safety, and

1 welfare are at risk; and

2 WHEREAS, Grandparents who take custody of their  
3 grandchildren prior to the grandchildren's suffering of a  
4 harmful incident are ineligible for foster care funding and  
5 assistance from the Department of Children and Family Services;  
6 and

7 WHEREAS, The only financial assistance option for this  
8 group of grandparents is "child only" grants from the  
9 Department of Human Services' Temporary Assistance to Needy  
10 Families (TANF) program; and

11 WHEREAS, The Department of Children and Family Services'  
12 foster care program provides monthly financial assistance that  
13 is three to four times greater than the TANF "child only"  
14 grants, and it also provides counseling, child care support,  
15 education services, college scholarships, and health services;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Grandparents raising grandchildren who are not in  
18 the foster care program are as valuable to the grandchildren  
19 and to the State as those who are in the foster care program;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, A significant function of government is to promote  
22 the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens; therefore, be  
23 it

24 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
25 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
26 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Joint Task Force on  
27 Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren is created and shall  
28 be comprised of ten members of the Illinois General Assembly  
29 appointed as follows: 3 members of the Senate, one of whom  
30 shall be co-chairperson, appointed by the President of the

1 Senate; 2 members of the Senate appointed by the Minority  
2 Leader of the Senate; 3 members of the House of  
3 Representatives, one of whom shall be co-chairperson,  
4 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and 2  
5 members of the House of Representatives appointed by the  
6 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives; all Joint Task  
7 Force members shall serve without compensation; and be it  
8 further

9 RESOLVED, That the Department on Aging, in collaboration  
10 with the Departments of Children and Family Services, Public  
11 Aid, and Human Services and any other relevant agencies, shall  
12 issue a report to the Joint Task Force on Grandparents Raising  
13 their Grandchildren no later than July 1, 2005 that assesses  
14 existing State and federal assistance programs that include the  
15 following:

16 (a) a review of all guaranteed benefits and other  
17 available support provided to grandparents through the  
18 Department of Children and Family Services' foster care  
19 program, including counseling, child care support, education  
20 services, college scholarships, and health services; KidCare  
21 and other relevant programs;

22 (b) a review of all guaranteed benefits and other  
23 available support provided to grandparents through the  
24 Department of Human Services' TANF program and other relevant  
25 programs;

26 (c) a review of all other means of grandparent-related  
27 support provided by State-funded and federally funded  
28 programs; and

29 (d) the estimated cost to the State if grandparents  
30 were not willing to or refused to take custody of and raise  
31 their grandchildren; and be it further

32 RESOLVED, That the Joint Task Force on Grandparents Raising  
33 their Grandchildren shall hold public hearings throughout the  
34 State regarding services needed by and available to

1 grandparents raising their grandchildren; and be it further

2       RESOLVED, That the Joint Task Force on Grandparents Raising  
3 their Grandchildren shall issue a report to the General  
4 Assembly no later than January 1, 2006 that makes  
5 recommendations on changes that should be made to services  
6 provided to grandparents raising their grandchildren through  
7 the foster care and TANF "child only" grant programs.